

do not know to which category this owl belongs. By analogy with *Bubo poensis*, *vosseleri* might be expected to be lowland. So far the bird in London is not known to have called. When it does so, it is hoped that the noise can be tape-recorded and that opportunities will occur for playing it back in suitable East African localities, to see whether a response can be elicited. I should think that, apart from other forested areas in the Usambaras good places to try would be in the Ulugurus and in the Ngurus (where I understand that Mr. J. G. Williams saw an owl he thought might be of this species). In all the time my wife and I spent at Amani from 1928 to 1946 we were never sure that we saw this owl. However, with the new specimen before us we think there is not much doubt that a big young owl whose head we could just see in a hole high up in a forest tree on 20th December 1930 was *vosseleri*, for according to my note its head was "very white, eye-ring black, bill bluish". Again, on 6th September 1931 I find a note that we saw a big brownish owl with black on the face fly across a road through deep forest at mid-day, but we do not seem to have heard the sort of deep notes one would associate with a *Bubo* except during one period, March–May 1929.

The occurrence of *Neophron percnopterus* in Northern Rhodesia

by R. J. DOWSETT AND A. J. TREE

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The Egyptian Vulture, *Neophron percnopterus* (Linn.) is of extremely local distribution in eastern and southern Africa, being confined largely to very arid areas. It is of interest therefore to record that individuals were identified in the Western and Eastern provinces of Northern Rhodesia in May and June of 1963. Although both are sight records, they are well authenticated and appear to be the first records of this species from the territory.

On 9th May 1963, Tree observed a bird of this species—in almost full adult plumage—at Ngosa Farm on the Kafue River in Western Province (12.18'S 27.28'E). Very close views were obtained and it was noted that the tail seemed to be in moult, the outer feathers being white with the rest a mixture of light grey-brown and white. The bird appeared from the north and was watched in flight for some two or three minutes before it circled and headed off to the north-west. Tree was struck especially by the way it carried its wings when gliding, at an angle, not unlike the Bateleur Eagle, *Terathopius ecaudatus*.

Then, on 3rd June 1963, Dowsett observed a bird in full adult plumage at Chapita Dam (13.55'S 32.18'E) in the Eastern Province. The bird was watched circling for five minutes in company with eight White-headed Vultures, *Trigonoceps occipitalis*. Its build and shape were much like a Hooded Vulture, *Necrosyrtes monachus*, except that it had a noticeably wedge-shaped tail. The black on the primaries and secondaries contrasted strongly with the almost white body feathers and with the rest of the wing, and the bird could be picked out in flight, even at some distance, with ease. Its black primaries, wedge-shaped tail and lack of black on the mantle distinguished it from the Palm-nut Vulture, *Gypohierax angolensis*.

It is perhaps worth noting that on 12th February 1960, Tree had observed what may have been a near-adult bird of this species in company with various migratory raptors near Mpika in the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia. However it is felt the identity of this bird was not established beyond all doubt. Apart from this, there is no indication that this bird has otherwise occurred in the territory at any time in the past.

For southern Africa Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1962) give the distribution as "throughout, except Belgian Congo, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland". However, there is in fact no evidence that it has ever occurred in Southern Rhodesia (Smithers *et al.* 1957) nor in Bechuanaland. Furthermore, it seems possible the species no longer occurs in South-West Africa, although further investigation is needed (Benson and Irwin, in press). Andersson, in Gurney (1872) recorded it as not uncommon in Damaraland and Namaqualand. However, Macdonald (1957) makes no mention of it and there seem to be only two records within the last forty years, namely a specimen collected by Bradfield at Quickborn in 1923 and a sight record from Otjiwarongo in 1938 (Hoesch and Niethammer, 1940). From Angola there is only a single, old record of a specimen from southern Mocamedes (Traylor, 1963).

Elsewhere in southern Africa it is now nowhere common. McLachlan and Liversidge (1957) report that the species is now rare in Cape Province, and Voous (1960) suggests it is nearing extinction in southern Africa as a whole. Irwin (1963) has rejected its reported occurrence in coastal Portuguese East Africa as being highly improbable.

In East Africa, there are recent acceptable sight records from the Ngorongoro crater, northern Tanganyika. Benson and White (1960) give a record by Vesey-FitzGerald (actual date 20th January 1959) and Benson (Benson and Irwin, in press) saw several in the area on 10th September 1961. On 30th October 1958 a nest of this species containing a single fledgeling was found at Kwakuchinja in the Mbulu district of Tanganyika (Thomas, 1960). Apart from these, however, there appear to be no records from East Africa south of Kenya, although Williams (1963) suggests it does occur in small numbers in Tanganyika. In much of Africa north of the equator it would appear to be locally not uncommon.

It is also worth recording that Curry-Lindahl saw four *N. percnopterus* in the Kagera National Park, Ruanda-Urundi, on 28th January 1952 (Curry-Lindahl, 1961). This record was not mentioned by Benson and Irwin (in press) as the authors did not, at the time, have access to Curry-Lindahl's paper (C. W. Benson, pers. comm.)

As *N. percnopterus* would appear to be considerably more common in east Africa, north of Tanganyika, than in southern Africa, and especially in view of the recent records from Tanganyika itself, the Northern Rhodesian birds seem in all probability to have been wanderers from east Africa. Whether or not many Egyptian Vultures winter in tropical Africa (Voous, 1960) is at present merely a matter for conjecture.

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Further breeding records from Northern Rhodesia (No. 4)

by C. W. BENSON AND CHARLES R. S. PITMAN

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The same considerations apply in this paper as referred to in the introduction to No. 3 (Benson & Pitman, 1963).

Egretta intermedia brachyrhynchos (Brehm)

G. Wedekind found a mixed colony of about 50 nests of this species, 50 of *Phalacrocorax africanus* and 25 of *Anhinga anhinga*, on the Kafue River at 14° 18' S., 27° 14' E., 8th April, 1963. The nests of the three species were completely intermingled, some being only four feet above water-level; others as much as 12 feet. One egg taken from a C/3 of the egrets measures 51 x 36 mm., and was fresh. But some clutches (mostly C/3) judging from their staining were well incubated, and there were some young in down, even perhaps as much as three weeks old.

Pitman in his Faunal Survey of Northern Rhodesia (1934: 177) in fact records nesting in the Lukanga Swamp at the end of March. A C/2 fresh was collected for him on 27th March, 1932, measuring 52.3 x 39.0 and 54.0 x 38.4 mm.

G. F. T. Child found a colony of 12 nests in a partially submerged Acacia tree, on the Northern Rhodesia side of the Kariba Lake, near Binga at about 17° 37' S., 27° 16' E., on 30th October, 1959. There were one or two young per nest, in varied stages of development. For the only other positive record of this species breeding locally (by R. I. G. Attwell), see Benson & Pitman (1963).